

REMARKS AND ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-10 are pending in the present application, of which claims 1, 6 and 9 are independent. Claims 1, 2, 6 and 9 have been amended. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 6 and 2 is found in the specification at page 3, line 17 and page 2, lines 12-15, respectively. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's determination that claims 9 and 10 are patentable over the prior art. Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form by incorporating the limitations of claims 6-8, on which it depended, and the indefiniteness rejections have been addressed; therefore Applicant believes claims 9 and 10 to be allowable.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kolonitsch et al. or JP 11-79733 in view of Cox et al. or Lindsay et al. or Kobetz. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The rejection relies on Cox et al. or Lindsay et al. or Kobetz for the claim limitation that the aluminum alkoxide product is combined with sulfuric acid to produce alum. The stated motivation for combining these references with Kolonitsch et al. or JP 11-79733 is that "one would appreciate that the aluminum alkoxide could be reacted according to any known or conventional reaction." Applicant respectfully submits that there are many known reactions of aluminum alkoxides, and that the Office has not identified any motivation to choose this particular one for combination with the subject matter of the other references. Without such a motivation, the Office has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kolonitsch et al. or JP 11-79733 in view of Cox et al. or Lindsay et al. or Kobetz, and further in view of Filby and Ashby '524. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Like the previously discussed rejection of claims 1-5, this rejection combines the references teaching production of alum with those teaching production of sodium borohydride. Here, too, and for the same reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the Office has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness, and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. The objection was to whether the Al(OR)_3 recited in lines 5 and 9 of claims 1 and 6 is the same as that recited in lines 4 and 8, and also to claim 2, in which ROH is not used as a reactant in step (a). Applicant has amended claims 1, 2 and 6 to address these objections.

Applicant believes that the amendments and remarks above have overcome the rejections. However, if the Examiner has any further objections to the application, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone at (847) 649-3891 to discuss the remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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